DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 209 298 TM 810 802

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TITLE Language Arts Assessment, Cherry Creek School District.
INSTITUTION Cherry Creek School District 5, Englewood, Colo.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 16p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Assessment; Elementary Secondary Education; Language Arts; *School Districts; *Student Educational Objectives; *Student Evaluation; *Test Results

ABSTRACT

Based on 3rd, 6th, 8th, and 10th grade student performance on selected, critical language arts objectives, this assessment provides information in terms of objectives achieved and not achieved. Approximately 25 objectives are assessed; each had three to five assessment items. Other objectives were tested with items requiring written responses. Results were computed at the district, school, and individual student levels, however, the present report is at the district level. Conclusions include: (1) objectives assessed at grade 3 were achieved by a majority; and (2) performance on objectives assessed at grade 6, 8, and 10 was mixed.
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LANGUAGE ARTS ASSESSMENT

CHERRY CREEK SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPRING, 1980

REPORTED BY

JOHN L. FENLON, ED.D.

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OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT
CHERRY CREEK SCHOOL DISTRICT
HELEN FELDMAN, ED.D., DIRECTOR

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INTRODUCTION

In April, 1980, the Program Evaluation Office conducted an assessment of student performance on selected, critical Language Arts objectives. All 3rd, 6th, 8th, and 10th grade students participated in the assessment. The assessment was based on objectives specified in the district's K-12 Language Arts Assessment Guide.

The purpose of the assessment was to provide information at the district, building, and individual student levels, in terms of objectives achieved and not achieved. At the district and building levels, comparisons can be made between performance this year and last year.

Students were assessed on approximately 25 objectives at the respective grade levels. Some objectives were tested with multiple choice items. These objectives typically had 3 to 5 assessment items. The student had to respond correctly to a specified number of items to demonstrate achievement of the objective. Other objectives were tested with items calling for constructed or written responses, e.g., a sentence, paragraph, note-taking, or outline. In these instances, the student had to meet certain criteria in order to demonstrate achievement of the objective.

All assessment data were computer processed. Objectives tested with multiple choice items were machine scored. Objectives requiring constructed or written responses were scored by teachers.

Test results were computed at the district, school, and individual student levels. School and individual student reports were provided to the school principals. The attached report is the district level report.

RESULTS

GRADE 3

Table 1 presents the percentages of district 3rd grade students who achieved the selected, critical Language Arts objectives. The objective code refers to symbols used in the district Language Arts Assessment Guide.

Table 1
Percent of District Grade 3 Students Achieving
Selected, Critical Language Arts Objectives (N=1472)

Code	Objective	Percent of Students Achieving Objective: District
WA1c	Write a complete sentence	84%
WB3a	Use information from maps and charts	94
WC1a	Write in manuscript	80
WC3a	Spell sight words	85
WC4f	Use capitalization	84
SA3b	Respond to single directions	88
CB2b	Identify meaning of words through context	81
CC1a	Identify an outcome	88
RA2a1	Apply phonics - short vowels	91
RA2a2	Apply phonics - digraphs	87
RA2a3	Apply phonics - dipnthongs	86
RA2a4	Apply phonics - blends	88
RA2a5	Apply phonics - ending consonants	89
RA2a6	Apply phonics - long vowels	55
RA2a7	Apply phonics - medial consonants	91
RA2a8	Apply phonics - beginning consonants	87
RA2a9	Apply phonics - silent letters	76
RA3a1	Use structural analysis - contractions	92
RA3a2	Use structural analysis - suffixes	86
RA3a3	Use structural analysis - rhyming words	86
RA3a4	Use structural analysis - word endings	87
RA3a5	Use structural analysis - plurals	49
RA3a6	Use structural analysis - compound words	82
RA3a7	Use structural analysis - prefixes	89
RB2a	Distinguish fact and fantasy	88
RB2b	Classify objects and ideas	81
RB2c	Identify literal meaning of a story	77
RB2e	Sequence parts of a story	76
RB3a1	Identify details	84
RB3a2	Identify main idea	66
RC4a	Use dictionary to find words and meanings	95

The data in Table 1 indicate that the objectives were generally achieved by the great majority of Grade 3 students. Objectives having lower percentages of achievement would include RA3a5, "use structural analysis - plurals" (49%), RA2a6, "apply phonics - long vowels" (55%), and RB3a2, "identify main idea" (66%). Results on these objectives in 1980 were almost identical to results obtained in 1979. Results on all objectives assessed in each of the two years were highly comparable.

Table 2 presents percentages of Grade 3 students who achieved a given number of objectives.

Table 2
Performance of District Grade 3 Students
on Selected, Critical Language Arts Objectives (N=1472)

Number of Objectives Achieved	Percent of Students Achieving Objectives
5	90 - 100%
20	80 - 89
3	70 - 79
1	60 - 69
1	50 - 59
1	40 - 49
-	30 - 39
-	20 - 29
-	10 - 19
-	0 - 9
31	

The data in Table 2 indicate that 5 of the 31 objectives tested were achieved by 90-100% of all Grade 3 students. Twenty (20) of the objectives were achieved by 80-89% of all students. Combining the data, it can be said that 25 of the 31 objectives were achieved by 80% or more of all Grade 3 students. On the otherhand, one objective was achieved by less than 50% of the students.

GRADE 6

Table 3 presents the percentages of Grade 6 students who achieved the selected, critical Language Arts objectives.

Table 3
Percent of District Grade 6 Students Achieving
Selected Critical Language Arts Objectives (N=1454)

Code	Objective	Percent of Students Achieving Objective District
WA1c	Write a sentence	76%
WA2a	Identify main idea	69
WA2b	Compose/arrange sentences into paragraph	70
WA3a	Organize writing with beginning, middle, ending	85
WA4a	Use dictionary	89
WC1b	Write cursive with form and spacing	53
WC3a	Spell words using common patterns and structural analysis	83
WC4a1	Identify objectives	73
WC4a2	Identify nouns	87
WC4a3	Identify pronouns	60
WC4a4	Identify verbs	76
WC4c	Identify subject/verb agreement	70
WC4d	Identify verb forms	93
WC4f	Use capitalization	66
CB2b	Identify meaning of word in context	91
RA2a	Apply phonics - vowel variance	82
RA3a1	Apply structural analysis - prefixes	93
RA3a2	Apply structural analysis - suffixes	93
RA3a3	Apply structural analysis - possessives	65
RA3a4	Apply structural analysis - root words	66
RB2a1	Identify generalizations	37
RB2a2	Draw conclusions	84
RB2a3	Distinguish between fact and fiction	80
RB2c	Identify literal and implied ideas	42
RB2e	Identify sequence of main ideas	23
RB3a	Identify supporting details	9
RC4c	Use text books and encyclopedias	16
RC5b	Follow written directions	45

The data in Table 3 indicate that most objectives were achieved by a large majority of the students. Some objectives were achieved by considerably smaller numbers of students. Objective RB3a, "identify supporting details," was tested with only two items. Students had to achieve both of the

items to achieve the objective. Only 9% achieved both items. In the future this objective should be tested with more than two items to more thoroughly assess the objective. Other objectives having lower percentages of student achievement were assessed with an adequate number of items, and the results should be further evaluated.

Results in 1980 were highly similar to those obtained in 1979. Exceptions would be WA1c, "write a complete sentence," WC1b, "write cursive with form and spacing," and RC5b, "follow written directions," all of which were considerably lower in 1980. These and other selected comparisons are as follows:

	1979	1980
WC1b	98%	53%
WC4a3	61	60
WC4f	63	66
RA3a3	71	65
RA3a4	64	66
RB2a1	24	37
RB2c	45	42
RB2e	24	23
RC4c	21	16
RC5b	76	43

Table 4 presents percentages of Grade 6 students who achieved a given number of objectives.

Table 4

Performance of District Grade 6 Students on Selected Critical Language Arts Objectives (N=1454)

Number of Objectives Achieved	Percent of Students Achieving Objectives
4	90 - 100%
7	80 - 89
5	70 - 79
5	60 - 69
1	50 - 59
2	40 - 49
1	30 - 39
1	20 - 29
1	10 - 19
1	0 - 9
28	

The data in Table 4 indicate that 4 of the 28 objectives tested were achieved by 90-100% of all Grade 6 students. Seven (7) of the objectives were achieved by 80-89% of the students. Combining the data, it can be said that 16 of the 28 objectives were achieved by 70% or more of all Grade 6 students. On the other hand, 6 objectives were achieved by less than 50% of the students.

GRADE 8

Table 5 presents the percentages of Grade 8 students who achieved the selected, critical Language Arts objectives.

Table 5
Percent of District Grade 8 Students Achieving
Selected Critical Language Arts Objectives (N=1355)

Code	Objective	Percent of Students Achieving Objective: District
WA1b	Identify complete sentences	97%
WA2a	Identify a unified paragraph	91
WA2b	Write paragraph to support topic sentence	74
WA4a	Locate information in the dictionary	51
WA4d	Take notes from sources	54
WC4a	Identify nouns, verbs and pronouns	56
WC4a1	Identify prepositions and conjunctions	56
WC4a2	Identify adjectives	85
WC4a3	Identify adverbs	82
WC4b	Identify simple subject and simple predicate	30
WC4c	Identify subject/verb agreement	74
WC4d	Identify verb tense	96
WC4f	Identify sentence with correct capitalization	78
WC4j1	Identify correct punctuation - commas in series	80
WC4j2	Identify correct punctuation - quotation marks	90
WC4j3	Identify correct punctuation - apostrophes	64
CA2a	Identify information that substantiates purpose	84
RB2a	Distinguish fact and opinion	63
RB2e	Identify details that support main idea	60
RC2a	Construct an outline that represents material read	76
RC4d	Use Readers' Guide	74
RD29	Identify meaning of written material in functional situations	95

The data in Table 5 indicate that most objectives were achieved by a large majority of the students. Objectives having lower percentages of achievement would include WC4b, "identify simple subject and simple predicate" (30%). An item analysis indicated difficulties identifying subject and predicate, when each was preceded by a clause. Objective WA4a was achieved by 51 percent. An

item analysis indicated students had difficulty locating synonyms and adverbial forms from the dictionary. Objective WA4d was achieved by 54 percent. The item analysis indicated that note taking was often incomplete regarding major details. Objective WC4a (56%) indicated student difficulties with identifying verbs. Objective WC4al (56%) indicated difficulties with prepositions.

It should be noted that the objectives having substantially lower percentages of achievement in 1980 had similarly lower percentages of achievement in 1979. The comparisons are as follows:

	1979	1980
WC4b	19%	30%
WA4a	36	51
WA4d	60	54
WC4a	52	56
WC4al	47	56

Table 6 presents percentages of Grade 8 students who achieved a given number of objectives.

Table 6

Performance of District Grade 8 Students on Selected Critical Language Arts Objectives (N=1355)

Number of Objectives Achieved	Percent of Students Achieving Objectives
5	90 - 100%
4	80 - 89
5	70 - 79
3	60 - 69
4	50 - 59
-	40 - 49
1	30 - 39
-	20 - 29
-	10 - 19
-	0 - 9
22	

The data in Table 6 indicate that 5 of the 22 objectives tested were achieved by 90-100% of all 8th grade students. Four (4) of the objectives were achieved by 80-89%, etc. Combining the data, it can be said that 14 of the 22 objectives were achieved by 70% or more of all Grade 8 students. On the other hand, one of the objectives was achieved by less than 40% of the students.

GRADE 10

Grade 10 students took only the constructed response or written part of the test this year. It was decided not to give the multiple choice part of the test until extensive revisions were made.

Table 7 presents the percentages of Grade 10 students who achieved the selected, critical Language Arts objectives.

Table 7
Percent of District Grade 10 Students Achieving
Selected Critical Language Arts Objectives

Code	Objective	Percent of Students Achieving Objective District (N=1249-1382)
WB3b/c	Use supporting research information without plagiarizing	68%
WA3a	Write unified work with introduction, body and conclusion	55
WC4e	Write structurally correct sentence	90
WA4d	Take notes representing content of written information	49
WA2b	Write a unified, coherent paragraph	78

The data in Table 7 indicate mixed results. Objectives WC4e and WA2b were achieved by a large majority of the students. Objective WB3b/c was achieved by a substantial percentage of students (68%). A scoring analysis of this objective indicated that many students paraphrased information without giving credit to the source. Objectives WA4d and WA3a were achieved by significantly lower percentages of the students. A scoring analysis of WA4d indicated that many students did not take accurate notes and failed to mention the title and author. The scoring analysis of WA3a indicated that the writing of many students was lacking in form and unity.

Results obtained in 1980 were similar to those obtained in 1979, with two exceptions. Objectives WA3a and WB3b/c were achieved by substantially lower percentages of students in 1980. The comparisons are as follows:

	1979	1980
WB3b/c	91%	68%
WA3a	93	55
WC4e	87	90
WA4d	38	49
WA2b	83	78

Table 8 presents a profile of student performance on the objectives across grade levels. A vertical profile of this nature helps to indicate patterns of high or low performance. It should be noted that many of the objectives were assessed only at certain grade levels.

Table 8

Profile of Student Performance on Selected, Critical Language Arts Objectives Across Grade Levels

Grade	Code	Objective	Percent of Students Achieving Objectives
3	WA1c	Write a complete sentence	84%
6	WA1c	Write a sentence	76
8	WA1b	Identify a complete sentence	97
10	WC4e	Write a structurally correct sentence	90
6	WA2a	Identify main idea	69
8	WA2a	Identify a unified paragraph	91
6	WA2b	Compose/arrange sentences into paragraph	70
8	WA2b	Write paragraph to support topic sentence	74
6	WA3a	Organize writing with beginning, middle, end	85
10	WA3a	Write unified work with introduction, body and conclusion	55
3	RC4a	Use dictionary to find words and meanings	95
6	WA4a	Use dictionary	89
8	WA4a	Locate information in the dictionary	51
3	WC1a	Write in manuscript	80
6	WC1b	Write cursive with form and spacing	53
3	WC3a	Spell sight words	85
6	WC3a	Spell words using common patterns and structural analysis	83
8	WA4d	Take notes from sources	54
10	WA4d	Take notes representing content of written information	49
6	WC4a1	Identify adjectives	73
8	WC4a2	Identify adjectives	85
6	WC4a2	Identify nouns	87
6	WC4a3	Identify pronouns	60
6	WC4a4	Identify verbs	76
8	WC4a	Identify nouns, verbs, and pronouns	56
6	WC4c	Identify subject/verb agreement	70
6	WC4a3	Identify pronouns	60
6	WC4a4	Identify verbs	76
8	WC4a	Identify nouns, verbs, and pronouns	56
6	WC4c	Identify subject/verb agreement	70
8	WC4c	Identify subject/verb agreement	74
6	WC4d	Identify verb forms	93
8	WC4d	Identify verb tense	96

Table 8 continued

Grade	Code	Objective	Percent of Students Achieving Objectives
3	WC4f	Use capitalization	84
6	WC4f	Use capitalization	66
8	WC4f	Identify sentence with correct capitalization	78
3	CB2b	Identify meaning of words through context	81
6	CB2b	Identify meaning of word in context	91
8	RD2g	Identify meaning of written material in functional situations	95
3	RA2a1	Apply phonics - short vowels	91
3	RA2a3	Apply phonics - diphthongs	86
3	RA2a6	Apply phonics - long vowels	55
6	RA2a	Apply phonics - vowel variance	82
3	RA3a7	Apply structural analysis - prefixes	89
6	RA3a1	Apply structural analysis - prefixes	93
3	RA3a2	Apply structural analysis - suffixes	86
6	RA3a2	Apply structural analysis - suffixes	93
3	RA3a6	Apply structural analysis - compound words	82
6	RA3a4	Apply structural analysis - root words	66
3	RB2a	Distinguish fact and fantasy	88
6	RB2a3	Distinguish between fact and fiction	80
8	RB2a	Distinguish fact and opinion	63
3	RB2c	Identify literal meaning of a story	77
6	RB2c	Identify literal and implied ideas	42
3	RB2e	Sequence parts of a story	76
6	RB2e	Identify sequence of main ideas	23
3	RB3a1	Identify details	84
6	RB3a	Identify supporting details	9
8	RB2e	Identify details that support main idea	60
6	RC4c	Use textbooks and encylopedias	16
8	RC4d	Use Readers Guide	74

CONCLUSIONS

1. Objectives assessed at Grade 3 were generally achieved by the large majority of students. Three (3) objectives were achieved by 50 to 70 percent of the students. Results in 1980 were highly similar to those obtained in 1979.

2. Performance on objectives assessed at Grade 6 was mixed. Sixteen (16) objectives were achieved by 70 percent or more of the students. Six (6) objectives were achieved by 50 to 69 percent of the students. Six (6) objectives were achieved by less than 50 percent of students. Results in 1980 were generally similar to those obtained in 1979.

3. Performance on objectives assessed at Grade 8 was mixed. Fourteen (14) objectives were achieved by 70 percent or more of the students. Seven (7) objectives were achieved by 50 to 69 percent of students. One (1) objective was achieved by less than 40 percent of students. Results in 1980 were highly similar to those obtained in 1979.

4. Performance on objectives assessed at Grade 10 was mixed. Three (3) objectives were achieved by 70 percent or more of the students. Two (2) objectives were achieved by 50-60 percent of students. Results in 1980 indicated substantially lower performance on two of the five objectives when compared with results obtained in 1979.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Attention should be given to curriculum development at the district level based on results of the assessment.

2. Consideration should be given to a multi-dimension assessment of certain objectives requiring constructed or written responses. E.g., a paragraph might be scored on dimensions such as structure, grammar, spelling, penmanship and other mechanics.

3. An item analysis in terms of content, number of items, and format should be done to improve the assessment instruments.

4. Consideration should be given to assessment of locally developed objectives at Grade 4 since a standardized assessment instrument is being used with Grade 3.

5. Consideration should be given to a further examination of which objectives should be regarded as "critical."

6. Consideration should be given to an assessment of other "non-critical" objectives. This should be done on a sampling basis for program information only.